

SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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Exhibits from the Decorative Arts Section, Golden Gate International Exhibition—*Hand Blocked Linen* by ROSE PAUSON; *Terra Cotta Plate* by GLENN LUKENS; *Ceramic Horse* by SORCHA BORU; *Red Glaze Vase* by LAURA ANDERSON.

Modern Textiles

By ELISABETH MOSES

THERE ARE two places in San Francisco where you become "color drunk." One is the Aquarium, the other is the textile room in the Decorative Arts Department at the Fair. I have never seen such an abundance of color combinations and such a multitude of materials and textures as these textiles present. Glistening brocades rush majestically to the floor, suggesting the atmosphere of a palace, while pastel-printed cottons remind us of

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Ceramics

By SORCHA BORU

FOR OVER a thousand years potter's fingers have been working clay, the white heat of their kilns has produced the strange alchemy of glazes. Generations of sculptors and painters have found intriguing possibilities in this plastic medium. Between the artist and the craftsman there has been evolved so many methods of working and decorating the clay that only rarely does the student find an opportunity to see and compare them all at

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Modern Textiles

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the cheerful carelessness of the summer house. Some are shiny, others dull; some are warm and soft, others cool and crisp. You can almost feel their surface merely by looking at them. Innumerable are the varieties of texture since, to the old natural fibers, new synthetic yarns have been added, such as those of cellophane, leathers, non-tarnishable metal and glass threads.

As if it were a prelude, Marta Taipale's tapestry, "Spinning and Weaving," opens the symphony of textiles, designed by more than a hundred artists from Europe and America. It is not possible to mention all of the designers in this short article, but a few names serve to represent the different countries. With the words, "By their fabrics ye shall know them," Dorothy Wright Liebes expresses in her catalogue introduction the fact that the culture and style of a period as well as of a people are characterized in their textiles. The French, for example: 18th century tradition is alive in those gorgeous metal fabrics of the "Soieries F. Ducharme de Lyon." When an artist such as Raoul Dufy creates deep-sea dreams in blue and silver and adds salmon and lavender-colored horses to his cool-shaded fishes, the fabric gets that certain piquant touch of Paris. Paul Marrot's printed percales are like sparkling champagne. There is an infinite charm in his flowers printed on black or little girls—the modern Venuses—emerging from the waves, in soft pastel shades. Interesting, how a textile can symbolize a certain atmosphere of a city merely through its material, surface and color just as strongly as music or a poem. Whenever I enjoy the drape "Firenze" of the Hungarian weaver Eva Szabo, a velvety red fabric with small horizontal stripes in gold and black, very aristocratic, very solemn, the magnificent palaces of Florence appear before my eyes. Among modern textile factories, Elsa Gullberg's is outstanding. For hundreds of years Swedish textiles have been famous. The old craftsmanship of the people, inherited from generation to generation, is enhanced by Miss Gullberg's artistic imagination. Her drapery "The Birds," a combination of damask, wool and linen, with gold threads, suggests in its Persian style a tale from the "Thousand and One Nights." While Marion Dorn's weavings prove that there are modern designers in England, most of the textiles are characteristic of British conservatism — which means nothing belittling. The plate-printed fabrics of Donald Brothers and Nora Jean Campbell's lin-

ens, with their restraint in colors, are noble, and ideal for the country house.

How different is the temperament expressed in the flowers of James West's hand-blocked linen. Those gigantic red hibiscus, tropical and exuberant, are grown under the California sun. Kamma Zethraus' "Calla Lily" flourishes in the same earth. And here we salute, last but not least, our local designers. It seems to me that California is a very fertile soil for the special art of textile designing. The beautiful hand-woven fabrics of Donald Forbes, Marjorie Flashmann and Lanette Scheeline, with their preference for warm colors, are certainly influenced by our glowing environment. Rose Pauson's cheerful print, "San Francisco," will be a document for the future similar to the frescoes in the Coit Tower. New York designers, such as Peri-Umana and Gilbert Rose, are very sophisticated in their use of modern materials.

Textiles play a most important part in modern interiors as draperies, rugs and wall hangings. The Montage of the Society of Women Artists shows in an excellent way the harmony of modern textiles with the glass and pottery of our period. It was a great deed of Mme. Marie Cuttoli to enliven the tapestry factories of France by inviting famous artists to act as designers. Artists such as Raoul Dufy, Henri Matisse, Jean Lurcat, Jean Miro and Georges Rouault have raised tapestries to the importance of paintings, introducing all modern styles.

I will not neglect to mention the beauty of the more personal textiles shown in this department. Exquisite doilies and napkins in pastel-shaded linens are made in the factories of Noel in Paris and Olga Asta in Venice. Old techniques are used in modern design in those embroideries as well as in the laces manufactured in Venice and other Italian cities.

Among modern decorative arts, all types of textiles hold a foremost place, and here I see an infinite field for the woman artist of today and the future.



High School Sponsors Tapestry

The weaving of the largest tapestry undertaken to date by Federal Art Project artists has begun under the direction of Maja Albee, Supervisor of the San Francisco Tapestry Division. Designed by David Parks of Oakland, the tapestry entitled "Music" will require over 100 multiple shades of yarn and will be five by eleven feet.

The tapestry was secured by the Piedmont High School through the WPA's Permanent Loan to tax-supported institutions.

Arnautoff And The Critics Discuss "Guernica"

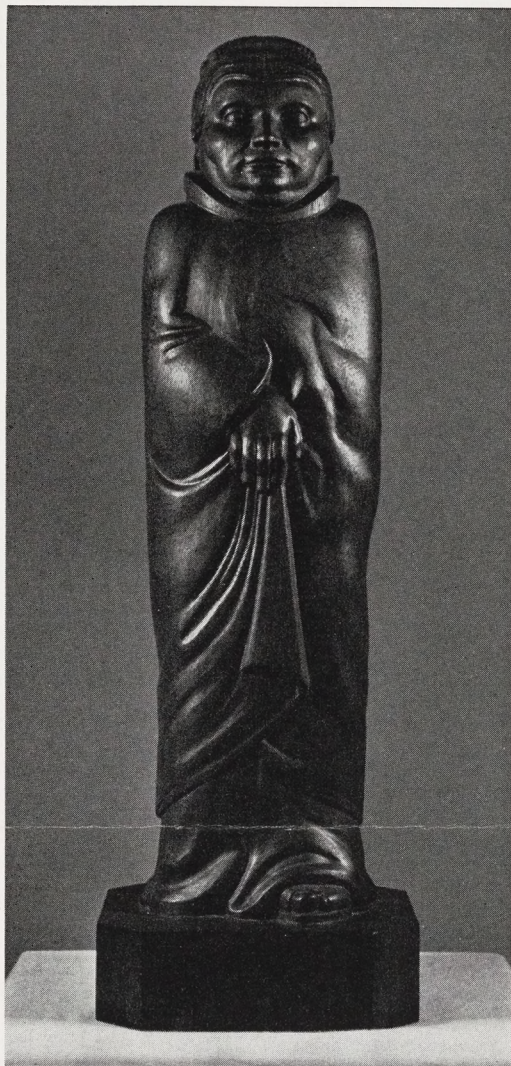
THE *Art Digest* of May 15, 1939, reprints several lines from Henry McBride's article in the *New York Sun*, in which Mr. McBride states that Picasso's "*Guernica*" is "certainly Picasso's masterpiece." Later Mr. McBride says: "Picasso is an ardent communist, and in painting *Guernica* he was attacking Franco with might and main, but the futility of propaganda in the hands of an artist is once more illustrated, for always in the case of the good artist the genius of the painter takes charge of the situation and the politician in him disappears in the effort to turn out a good picture."

The falsity of the reasoning of Mr. McBride is obvious. I do not know whether Picasso is a communist or not. In this case it is not important. *Guernica* bespeaks the struggle in which the bestiality of fascism was employed to break the people of Spain. The monstrosity of the crime was so revolting that, as Jerome Klein of the *Post* puts it, "The tradition from which artists had been retreating for more than a century was to be rededicated by the painter who was the very symbol of unbridled personal phantasy."

This statement is very important, although not quite correct. On many occasions before "*Guernica*" Picasso has been conscious of the importance of the subject matter; for example, in some pictures of his blue period and in his bullfights where we see his attempts to adjust his medium to the subject: poverty as in "*Beggars*" and pain as in his bullfights.

I must admit that in his previous compositions poverty and pain were rationalized to such an extent that I could not help but see that Picasso does not feel, but only imagines, pain. Formal problems and intellectual solutions of them were too obvious. Only in "*Guernica*" does Picasso reach the point in which the form of expression does not overcome you so much that you are willing to forget about the content. To the contrary, it is the content and the deep, sincere resentment against forces which will stop at nothing in their greed for possession, that arrests your attention and holds you.

I do not think that "futility of propaganda in the hands of an artist is once more illustrated." A work of art is always "propaganda" because it always carries a message. The only question may be—propaganda of what? "Propaganda" of our trivial peculiarities, technical novelties and mannerisms, or propaganda of our relations, emotions,



Opera Goer 174

By MICHAEL VON MEYER

The above wood sculpture received a bronze medal at the 4th Annual Exhibition of Sculpture recently held in Oakland.

thoughts which unite us into a human society or divide that society into classes or groups?

It is obvious that particularly in "propaganda" Picasso's *Guernica* does not fail. It carries his "propaganda" (message) with such force as we never had seen in Picasso before. That force is strong because it is applied to the subject of social struggle in which all of us are participants. It is strong because Picasso realizes that millions resent with him.

I cannot tell you, "Go, see and enjoy that painting by Picasso"—nobody can enjoy it; but I can tell you, "Go, see and participate." Deep emotion and complete mastery of his technique created this masterpiece of Picasso's.—Victor Arnautoff.

San Francisco Art Association Bulletin

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Guernica at Museum

PICASSO's "Guernica" is now installed in the San Francisco Museum of Art. Powerful, commanding, it dominates in superb fashion the huge sculpture court. It is the most important exhibit thus far to be displayed there—and, we suspect, as important as any that may succeed it in the future.

Chaos, death, destruction; blind impulses of hate; the cruel waste of war and the surging resentment that grows out of it—such is the story of *Guernica* as depicted by Picasso—depicted as only a great artist who has felt the story could express it.

It is an overwhelming canvas and has all the moving force and tragedy of a crucifixion. It could, in a sense, be called a *Modern Crucifixion* for it presents unequivocally the crucifixion of humanity.

It is Picasso's masterpiece—the culmination of all the years and years of experiment in search of an adequate form.

To the lay members of the Art Association the *Bulletin* stresses the importance of this painting which San Francisco is so fortunate in obtaining, especially at this time. M.R.



Peyton Boswell Interviewed

MR. PEYTON BOSWELL, editor of "The Art Digest," New York, was a recent visitor to San Francisco. Coming to California on a pleasure jaunt may have had much to do with the whole-hearted optimism with which he viewed things in the West. Be that as it may, we pass on to our readers with much pleasure Mr. Boswell's reactions to Western art, San Francisco museums and his (voluntary) opinion of our *Bulletin*.

"What do you feel," we asked him, "is the trend of American art today?" "Away from the 'American Scene,' he unhesitatingly answered, into a purer art."

"Do you think art is being influenced by political movements?" "Not seriously, judging from the big American shows. This seems to be passing—maybe it is yet to come. However, sincerity is no excuse for bad painting.

Artists are realizing this more and more."

"Incidentally," he went on, "your American contemporary section at the Exposition is the best I've seen. It's far better than the Corcoran."

"What do you think of the awards?" "Braque would have been O.K. in 1929. I would like to have seen something more recently painted receive first place, something newer. Braque is pretty academic. It was, of course, a safe award." (Mr. Boswell should have remained in San Francisco a few weeks longer.)

"What do you think of the influence of WPA on art?" "Good—especially because it has widened the circle of understanding. It has been the strongest influence, thus far, to decentralize art. New York is still the center of merchandising of art, but the actual producing angle has spread. The small towns have benefitted."

"Are you impressed by the art of the Exposition?" we questioned. "I think your Fair is beautiful. But my biggest shock was the crowds in the Art Galleries. Long lines of people waiting to view an art exhibit is something new. But everything is so progressive out here. San Francisco museums are the finest in the country. Here it is mid-summer and your San Francisco Museum of Art is showing a half dozen excellent exhibitions.

"But the thing that hit me," he went on, "are the watercolors. California is showing the best watercolors in America. Both in the southern part of the state and in San Francisco, I was surprised at the abundance and variety of fine water color painting.

"Of course, I have a tender spot for California," he continued. "'The Art Digest' originated here. My father started it. And your little *Bulletin*! I read every word of it when it arrives. One sees it at all the dealers. It helps to keep us posted, you know. It's quite alive."

We did not *know*, but we had *hoped*. Thank you, Peyton Boswell. M.R.



Helen Forbes' mural for the Susanville Post Office is now installed. Miss Forbes has painted an intimate little woodland scene, using egg tempera on canvas prepared with gesso. Brilliant veridian, reddish brown and chartruese predominate. The painting, 12 ft. by 5 ft., is being well received by the people of Susanville.

Miss Forbes is now at work on sketches for a mural in the post office at Monrovia.

Ceramics

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once. There is such an opportunity now at Treasure Island.

In the beginning, pottery meant "pot" and it was formed entirely by hand. The clay was rolled out into strips and then coiled one strip above another until the shape was completed. There are beautiful examples of this method, still used by the Indians, in the Federal Building. Marie and Julien, famous the country over, make it there. The decorations with earth colors on this smoke-fired ware show how pleasing simple patterns may be.

This same way of using coils is generally the one taught children, and it is interesting to compare the Indian work with the school exhibits in the Los Angeles and San Francisco buildings.

But it was the invention of the potter's wheel by some unknown genius of long ago that made possible perfection of form and the intimate alliance between art and utility. Today this partnership has reached a high peak and nearly every building at the Fair displays some form of expert work. Perhaps the most interesting is found in the Fine Arts Building, the French Pavilion, the Central and South American group, especially Peru, Ecuador, and Mexico; where we find ingenuous use of forms in terra cotta; and International Hall. In the latter, Denmark, Czecho-Slovakia, Holland and Portugal have their wares. These are primarily commercial, but in each the character and feeling of the country, even the difference of the clay, is strongly apparent; the bright peasant decoration on the low-fired clay of Portugal contrasted with the cool, subtle loveliness of Copenhagen porcelain burned at a very high heat. For those who have worked with clay and know the almost insurmountable difficulties of handling porcelain paste the large vase in the Denmark exhibit that was made especially for the Fair, is something "for to see and to admire." Although the type of decoration may seem somewhat old-fashioned, in technique and workmanship it is superb.

Another remarkable vase or urn is the enormous Sevres piece in the French Pavilion, again a triumph in the use of high-fired ware. A trip to the French building is worthwhile for the pottery alone. There are not many pieces, but those few are very fine. Humor that lends itself so readily to clay is found in the work of the modern Sebastian. Underglaze, overglaze, engobe are all used with subtlety and a gay touch that is distinctly French. Dufy's vases painted freely with

overglazes are delightful. They are in the Fine Arts building, however.

In fact, in each foreign exhibit of pottery the individuality of the country is apparent. One wonders if, as is sometimes claimed, the United States has not yet created its own type. One way to find out is to visit the Art building.

Here in the Decorative Arts section Dorothy Liebes has collected not only the best of modern European work but a vigorous and alive cross-section of contemporary American pottery. This is a group selected from the National Ceramics show held annually at the Syracuse Museum under the direction of Anna Olmsted. There are 100 pieces and nearly every state in the Union is represented. To the question, "Is it typical American?" one can only answer "Yes" and "No." Much of the humor and the lively quality of the subject matter is certainly our own. There is an astonishing variety in method and ideas. The potters are experimenting and doing so with keenly alert minds. Material only recently available for ceramics, such as lithium, vanadium and selenium, have been used with distinction. Beautiful and difficult turquoise glazes are shown as well as reduced copper reds and salt-glazed stoneware. The American section as a whole is stimulating and one to be proud of.

Around the corner from the ceramic exhibit in a case with the books, are strong, solid examples of Danish stoneware, beautiful in color, perfect in workmanship. Figurines from Vienna show how charming plastic forms may be. Also one should not miss the delightful figurines and tiles of the Swedish sisters, Lisbet and Gocken Jobs.

All in all, a day of pottery at the Fair is an exciting and satisfying adventure.



Artists, Attention

We have been advised of the following open shows:

California Watercolor Society Exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum Thursday, October 12th, to Sunday, November 19th. Last day for delivery of pictures to Los Angeles Museum, Thursday, October 5th. Jury meets Monday, October 7th. Original works in watercolor, pastel and gouache.

Oakland Art Gallery 7th Annual Exhibition of watercolors, pastels, drawings and prints.

Works for this show will be received at the San Francisco Museum of Art from 1 to 6 on September 22nd and 23rd only.

Announcements with complete information may be obtained at the S. F. Museum of Art.

SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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Current Exhibitions

Amberg-Hirth, 165 Post Street: Modern Decorative Arts.

California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Lincoln Park: Original Covers for the "The New Yorker," through September 10; Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Will Sparks, through September 16; Water Colors by Robert Bach and Daniel Romano, September 1 through 30; Painting and Sculpture by members of the San Francisco Branch of "The Society for Sanity in Art," through September; Painting and Sculpture by San Francisco Artists, through September.

City of Paris Gallery, Geary and Stockton Streets: September 4 to September 16, Memorial Exhibition, William Barr; September 18 to 23, Christmas Cards; September 25 to October 30, Old Engravings of the 17th Century.

De Young Memorial Museum, Golden Gate Park, Frontiers of American Art, through September; Pre-Columbian Peruvian Textiles, opening September 15.

Duncan Vail Co., 364 Sutter Street: September 6 to September 20, Water Colors by Leon Amyx; September 20 to October 4, Fashion Drawings by Leota Sachs; October 4 to October 18, Water Colors by Emil Rutz.

Gump Gallery, 246 Post Street: General Exhibition of Paintings and Prints.

Oakland Art Gallery, Municipal Auditorium: September 3 to October 1, Paintings by Nikolai Fechin and Sculpture by Lulu Hawkins Braghetta; October 8, Water Color Annual.

Paul Elder Gallery, 239 Post Street: To September 16, Water Colors by Jean Gates Hall; September 18 for 3 weeks Oils and Drawings by Justin Murray.

Shell Oil Display: September 1 to 15, O. Ninteman, Air Brush; September 15 to 30, Richard Rundle, Photographs.

San Francisco Museum of Art, Civic Center: Guernica, the mural by Pablo Picasso, with 59 preparatory studies and supplementary works by "progressive" artists of the past and present, showing through September 18; Scenes of San Francisco, original Oils and Water Colors, also photographs show-

Members Gallery at Museum

The Art Association Members Gallery at the San Francisco Museum of Art opened the Fall Season of One Man Shows with an Exhibition of Oils and Water Colors by Leah Rinne Hamilton. It continues through September 10.

Mrs. Harriet Wheden will show drawings from September 11 to September 24. Water Colors by James Budd Dixon will be on view from September 25 to October 8. Bertha Walker Glass will exhibit paintings from October 9 to October 22.



Art Association Members are invited to attend the *First Alumni Poorilly*, given by the Alumni Association of the California School of Fine Arts. Wear old Parilia costumes or combinations of costumes. Dancing, refreshments. Admission 35 cents. Saturday, evening, September 16, California School of Fine Arts.



The Fall Session of the California School of Fine Arts has attracted the largest number of students in many years. Summer School attendance exceeded any year since 1927.



ing typical San Francisco scenes from 1837 to the present day, on view through October 8; Paintings by William Glackens, through September 24; Dance Portraits in Water Colors, dances by Marie Von Sarnen; paintings by Warren Chase Merritt; September 8 to 22; Water Colors by Giovanni Saccaro, through September 18; Show of Local Print Makers, prints by Armin Hansen and John Winkler, through September; Character Portraits, photographs by Julian Smith, through September 24.